



IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE
4715 S. BYRD ST., BLDG. 518
BOISE, IDAHO 83705-8095



March 2, 2021

In Reply Refer To: Idaho Army National Guard Simco Training Area Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Public/Agency Participant:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) are soliciting comments on the IDARNG's proposal to use lands managed by the BLM, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) for military maneuver training activities. The proposed training area is approximately 28,430 acres in size, and is located east of Simco Road in Elmore County, adjacent to the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC). The proposed training area is required by the IDARNG to offset reduced availability of accessible maneuver training lands within the OCTC in order to meet Department of the Army (DoA) training requirements, and to prepare for and ensure troop combat readiness and safety.

The proposed action would require rights-of-way (ROW) on 12,776 acres of BLM lands, 555 acres of BOR lands, and a long-term lease on 15,097 acres of IDL lands. The majority (74%) of the proposed training area falls within the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA). As such, the BLM will be a Co-lead agency with the IDARNG and National Guard Bureau (NGB) on the Environmental Analysis (EA). A summary of the proposed action is attached.

The public comment period will open **March 5, 2021**. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received by **April 5, 2021**, and must be directly relevant to the proposal and project area. Public scoping comments sent electronically should be sent to **ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@mail.mil** or **blm_id_fourriversoffice@blm.gov** with the title of this project in the subject line. The preliminary EA is expected to be completed in June of 2021 with a final decision in August 2021.

The BLM and IDARNG will together host two virtual public scoping meetings via Zoom on March 17, 2021. The virtual meeting will include a presentation of the project proposal with an opportunity for the public to submit questions to specialists. Pre-registration is required, after which a confirmation email will be sent with information on how to join the meeting. You can register for the Zoom meeting on the BLM's ePlanning site **<https://go.usa.gov/xsbJZ>**.

Additional information about the project can also be found at the IDARNG website **<https://emomil.imd.idaho.gov/>** (Documents for Review), or the BLM's ePlanning website **<https://go.usa.gov/xsbJZ>**.

Any individuals, groups, or organizations wishing to comment on this process should attend the public scoping meetings or submit written comments to:

Idaho Army National Guard
Environmental Management Office
Attention: Charles Baun
4715 South Byrd Street, Bldg. 518
Boise, Idaho 83705-8095

Or

Bureau of Land Management
Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area
Attention: Charlotte Alexander
3948 Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705

Electronic comments should be submitted to **ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@mail.mil** or **blm_id_fourriversoffice@blm.gov** by close of business on April 5, 2021.

Before including address, phone number, email-address, or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.